



Childhood Connections

April 4, 2023

Spotlight on Professionals

Spotlight on Professionals aims to share stories from those working in childhood programs. This includes all professionals such as home visiting, early intervention, child care, Head Start, preschool, and afterschool. These stories are also available on the [Early Connections website](#).



Photo Credit: Hannibal Career & Technical Center

Hannibal Career & Technical Center offers a high school Teaching Professions class, designed for students who are interested in pursuing a career in education.

During the practicum portion, students obtain over 75 observation hours in a variety of classrooms, including every grade level from pre-kindergarten to 8th grade, as well as special education classes.

Students in the class recently attended the DESE Conference on the Young Years (CYY). Attending CYY was a valuable experience for the students in the Teaching Professions class. CYY provided the students a unique opportunity to learn from experienced professionals in the field, to broaden their understanding of early childhood education, and to gain practical skills that will help them succeed in their future careers as early childhood professionals.

CELEBRATE! Week of the Young Child

April 1 – 7, 2023, is the Week of the Young Child! Celebrate children and early learning this week with creative and collaborative activities.

Whether building, cooking, singing, or creating, you can help children learn through fun-filled projects.

For a list of themed activities for young children, from Music Monday to Family Friday, visit [Week of the Young Child Themed Days on the Early Connections website](#).



REMINDER! Early Childhood State Advisory Council (ECSAC) Meeting

The next meeting of the ECSAC will be on Tuesday, April 25, 2023, at 12:30 p.m. Read more about the [agenda](#) and



Week of the Young Child®

NEW! Child Care Subsidy Provider Application

We are pleased to announce a [new child care subsidy provider application](#)! The website with the new application, terms and conditions, training requirements, and other helpful information was updated on April 3, 2023.

In an effort to make the application process easier, the new subsidy application was designed to be similar to the child care relief funds applications, with an application form and Terms & Conditions.

Current subsidy providers will receive an email with instructions. If you have questions, you can call 573-526-3011 or email the [subsidy team](#).

Thank you for your patience as we continue to improve our processes for child care subsidy.

REMINDER! Innovation Grants for Child Care

There are three new funding opportunities for businesses and community partners who want to help increase access to child care in their local community. Check out [this flyer](#) with information about all three grants: Innovation Start-up, Innovation Expansion, and Workforce Innovation for Child Care Staff.

JOIN US! Wear Blue on April 7 for Child Abuse Prevention

In 2021, there were 35 Missouri children who died from inflicted injury at the hands of a parent or caretaker. On April 7, wear blue to raise awareness for child abuse and neglect prevention on your social media. [Share your pictures here!](#) (This event is sponsored by the Missouri Department of Social Services.)

council responsibilities on the [ECSAC webpage](#).

REMINDER! Child Care Relief Funds Application

There are several applications open for child care providers to apply. Check out all applications on the [website](#).

Do you have any questions about your relief funds application? Customer service representatives are available to help. For additional information, please reach out to a representative at 573-415-8951, extension 1.

REMINDER! Missouri Part C State Plan for First Steps Changes

Office of Childhood (OOC) proposed to amend the state regulations implementing Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), known as the Missouri Part C State Plan for First Steps. The State Board of Education approved the amendments at the January 2023 board meeting.

A webinar was held for First Steps providers on March 28, 2023, to give more information on the upcoming changes. First Steps providers who did not receive the recording



REMINDER! Find Your Local Community Leader

Community Leaders are currently contracted in 18 regions across the state. Each community leader has created a Local Early Childhood Plan specific to their region. Their plans address the strategies they will use to achieve these objectives:

- Increase awareness of early childhood programs,
- Compile a directory of resources available to families with young children,
- Network with other community leaders, and
- Serve as a conduit for information between the state and their region.

Community leaders have established relationships with hundreds of local stakeholders, ranging from health agencies and child care providers to home visiting programs, school districts, and local businesses. They use these relationships with local stakeholders, other community leaders, and OOC staff to brainstorm ways around barriers that families face as they access needed resources.

You can learn more on the [community leader webpage](#). Find your local community leaders and reach out to them to get involved! They are always looking to engage local stakeholders.

UPDATE! Child Care Relief Funds

There are several relief grants available to child care providers who are contracted with the DESE child care subsidy program or licensed with all health and safety training.

- Paycheck Protection grants support provider operations. [Apply here!](#) Application closes April 30, 2023.

can email [Early Intervention](#) for a copy.

SAVE THE DATE! 2024 Conference on the Young Years

Thank you to the nearly 1,800 early childhood professionals who attended the 50th annual Conference on the Young Years (CYY). The conference included childhood professionals who work in home visiting, preschool, child care, early intervention, higher education, and more.

The 2024 CYY will be held March 7-9, 2024, at Tan-Tar-A Conference Center. We hope to see you again!

ANNOUNCEMENT! Scholarships for Education

Do you want to advance your career with little or no costs and a dedicated advisor to help you every step of the way?

Scholarships are available for child care professionals with different backgrounds, needs, and dreams! Check out [Advance your Child Care Career](#) to participate or sponsor an employee.

UPDATE! KEA for Public Schools

The Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) [webpage](#) has state-level data results from the KOF in 2021

- Retention for Child Care Staff grants support child care staff members. [Apply here!](#) Application closes April 30, 2023.
- Sustain Subsidy Operation grants support provider operations (must be contracted with the DESE child care subsidy program to receive these funds). [Apply here!](#) Application closes May 31, 2023.

Coming Soon! We are working on another Annual Training Costs grant for expenses expected in 2023. Watch for an announcement about this grant later this month.

Check out all of the child care relief funds applications on the [Child Care Relief Funds website](#).

REMINDER! Staff to Child Ratio Within Infant/Toddler Units

This is a reminder for licensed and license-exempt programs.

If your facility is operating with a nap room within the infant/toddler unit, you must ensure that supervision and staff/child ratios are continuously maintained within both the nap room and the classroom.

Nap rooms are neither suggested nor discouraged from use. However, they often create a challenge to maintain staff/child ratio of one caregiver to four infants/toddlers.

For example: An infant/toddler classroom with eight infants in care requires at least two caregivers to be present. In the event that five infants are sleeping in the nap room and three infants are playing in the classroom, then three caregivers would be required to maintain ratio within the two rooms of the unit.

We encourage child care facilities with infant/toddler units and nap rooms to have a clear plan and caregiver schedule to ensure the unit is well staffed.

REMINDER! Missouri First Steps Application for Federal Funds Under IDEA

Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is the federal law governing Missouri's First Steps early intervention program for children

and 2022 (under the Pilot and Training tab) and information on the differences between screening and assessment (under the Screening versus KEA tab).

We are gearing up for the 2023 KEA. An [Administrative Memo](#) was disseminated to all school district administrators to provide more details about the KEA activities for school year 2023-24. Information contained in the memo includes steps to register kindergarten teachers for training and other resources.

NEW! Safe Cribs Brochure

The Safe Cribs for Missouri program provides portable cribs and safe sleep education to low-income families who do not have other resources for obtaining a crib. You can learn more about the program in this new [flyer](#).

UPDATE! Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS)

To learn more about the Missouri early childhood integrated data system (ECIDS), you can review the updated [document](#).

UPDATE! Missouri HealthNet Coverage

During the official COVID pandemic, the need to

birth to age three with developmental delays or disabilities and their families. IDEA Part C funds support services to children and families in the First Steps program. OOC developed a [draft federal application](#) for Part C federal funds to help pay for First Steps services.

The draft application and General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) Form is available for the public to review through April 25, 2023.

Written public comments on the application may be submitted by mail:

Office of Childhood

Attn: Early Intervention

P.O. Box 480, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480

Or by email to [Early Intervention](#) (indicate *First Steps Application* in the subject line).

Written public comments on the Missouri Part C application and GEPA form may be submitted until the close of business on April 25, 2023.

REMINDER! Free Training Available

Registration is open for [MO-SECA](#), a program designed to provide business training and assessment for child care administrators who are **licensed and contracted** with DESE child care subsidy program, including: child care centers, child care group homes, and licensed family child care.

For questions about MO-SECA registration, [email](#) or call 314-558-6966.

NEW! Simplified Family Qualifications for Child Care Subsidy

Effective April 30, 2023, families will have a simplified process when applying for Child Care Subsidy, which includes the following:

- An interview is not required but may be requested if needed.
- Only the applicant is required to have a need for child care.
- Applicants can now use "job search" as a need for child care, which will allow part-time child care for children up to 90 days while the parent looks for work.
- Applicants working, training, or going to school over 30 hours per week (shown on their

renew MO HealthNet (Missouri Medicaid) healthcare coverage was temporarily suspended.

However, beginning **April 1, 2023**, the Department of Social Services, Family Support Division will be required to restart annual renewals for this important healthcare coverage for thousands of Missouri families.

Please ensure families do not lose coverage by sharing this important information with those who rely on MO HealthNet for healthcare coverage.

Learn more from the [Department of Social Services](#).

REMINDER! Free Resource for Pregnant Women

The BABY & ME – Tobacco Free Program™ provides telehealth cessation counseling sessions and cessation incentives at no cost.

A [recorded webinar](#) on the program is available. For more information, contact [Ashlie Otto](#) at the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services.

RESOURCE! For Families of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children

income verification) can be authorized for full-time child care without having to produce a work or additional school schedule.

- Children with a protective service case will have an expedited internal application process.

We are excited to work in conjunction with the Missouri Department of Social Services - Family Support Division and Children's Division to implement these changes to better serve the children and families.

Families First is a program offered by the Missouri School for the Deaf that serves families of children who are deaf or hard of hearing from birth through age eight and who live anywhere in Missouri.

Services involve an assigned Families First parent advisor to educate, support, and coach parents on a variety of topics unique to children with hearing impairments. For more information visit the [Missouri School for the Deaf Outreach and Resources Center](#).

Spotlight on Success

Spotlight on Success aims to share stories from local programs that are building community partnerships in order to strengthen and coordinate childhood programs.



Photo Credit: Mineral Area College Early Learning Academy

Mineral Area College (MAC) Early Learning Academy recently opened its doors to children ages two through five years. MAC received funding from OOC through Child Care Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) relief funds for higher education institutions to start-up or expand child care on their campuses, which supports and strengthens child care access for families receiving child care subsidy. Having on-campus child care at MAC helps allow parents to work or pursue their education/training.

The Academy is currently working with Workforce Development in the area to discuss new innovation grant opportunities that would allow a partnership with local businesses/companies and the Academy. Other partnerships include The Plant Lady, The Rotary Club of St. Francois County, Kiwanis of Farmington, First Steps, Parents as Teachers parent education program, Pregnancy Resource Center, and St. Francois County Health Department.

Academy Director Jennifer Sikes said, "Stakeholder meetings were held and surveys were generated to simply determine a need for high quality preschool, as well as, filling a need for practicum/clinical for our nursing and education/child development programs. Advocacy and community partnerships continue to grow as we visit with civic organizations about our program and seek out resources to better serve our families that have a need. The community leaders in region 22 are our area resource center for meeting the needs of all things early childhood in the community. Our leadership staff attend the meetings each month to be a voice for our academy, our families, and the early childhood community."

UPDATE! Preschool Development Grant



The Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five (PDG B-5) provides funding over three years to coordinate a more effective, high-quality early childhood system that better prepares Missouri children for success.

Each month the Office of Childhood hosts a live webinar to provide updates and information about the PDG B-5 to stakeholders. [A recording](#) and the [PowerPoint slides](#) from the March webinar is available in case you were unable to attend and wish to hear the information. You can view archived webinars here:

- [February 2023](#)
- [January 2023](#)
- [November 2022](#)
- [October 2022](#)
- [September 2022](#)
- [August 2022](#)

A [PDG B-5 dashboard](#) is also updated monthly. This dashboard provides an at-a-glance look at priority areas, budget status, and key accomplishments.

PDG B-5 Monthly Webinar

Join us for the next PDG B-5 Stakeholder webinar on Wednesday, April 26, 2023, from noon to 12:45 p.m. to learn more and ask questions. You can [access the webinar](#) in a Google Chrome or Safari web browser. Do not view in Internet Explorer. We hope you can participate!

Archived Editions of Childhood Connections

Visit the Office of Childhood website to find [previous editions](#) of the Childhood Connections.

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